

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SUVA 01716 090715Z
ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 L-03 CG-00 DOTE-00 COME-00
DLOS-09 EB-08 H-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7903
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SUVA 1716

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS, XP, FJ
SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC FISHERIES -SPRFO

REF: STATE 227133

1. I RAISED QUESTION OF SPRFO WITH THE P.M.DURING INAUGURAL
FLIGHT TO PAGO PAGO AND IN PRIVATE LUNCHEON IN SUVA FOR
GOVERNOR AND MRS. COLMEN (GIVEN BY THE MARAS) ON 6 SEPT.

2. IN BOTH INSTANCES DISCUSSION DID NOT GET VERY FAR IN
PINPOINTING THE P.M.'S VIEWS ON THE DRAFT CONVENTION TO BE
DISCUSSED BY THE FORUM IN NIUE 15-22 SEPT. THE REASON FOR
THIS IS THAT THE P.M, AS HE PUT IT, HAD NOT READ HIS
BRIEF YET. IN FACT HE WAS ONLY VAGUELY AWARE OF THE
EXISTENCE OF A DRAFT CONVENTION ON WHICH A CONSENSUS HAS
BEEN CRYSTALIZING AS I PUT IT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SUVA 01716 090715Z

3. HE RECALLED THAT THE FIRST TIME HE HAD HEARD OF THE
SPRFO IDEA WAS FROM P.M. MULDOON, ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO,
DURING A DISCUSSION ON THE 200 MILE ECONOMIC ZONE. MULDOON
HAD TOLD HIM AT THE TIME THAT IN VIEW OF THE 'ISLANDS'
OBVIOUS INABILITY TO POLICE THEIR RESPECTIVE ZONES A
COLLECTIVE FISHERIES ORGANIZATION WAS NEEDED TO HELP
THEM GET THE BENEFITS EXPECTED FROM THE EXPANDED ZONE.

4. AFTER IMPLYING THAT THE SPRFO IDEA AS CONCEIVED BY MULDOON HAD BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE IN ITS MEMBERS FROM OUTSIDE THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS HE ASKED ME FOR THE U.S. VIEWS ON THE DRAFT CONVENTION. I TOLD HIM THAT WE VIEW THE DRAFT AS AN ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE EVEN IF NOT THE BEST WE HAD HOPED WHEN WE ENTERED THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND WE ARE READY TO SIGN IT. IN FACT, WE HAD STARTED THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR ITS EVENTUAL SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE AND HAD MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN CREATING DOMESTIC CONSENSUS, WHICH INCLUDES PRIVATE INDUSTRY, BY CAREFUL AND DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE VARIOUS PROVISIONS IN THE DRAFT. AS EVIDENCE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THE DRAFT I MENTIONED OUR ACTION TO PROVIDE \$75,000 FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERIM OFFICE AND BROUGHT HIM UP TO DATE ON OUR CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPEC.

5. SENSING THAT HE WAS GENUINELY INTERESTED I WENT AHEAD AND MENTIONED THE APPROACH MADE SOMETIME AGO BY JIOJI (KITOBALAVU) WITH REGARD TO CERTAIN AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT AND EXPLAINED THAT AFTER CONSULTING THE DEPT, I WAS ABLE TO TELL JIOJI THAT IN WASHINGTON'S VIEW, THE JUNE DRAFT CONVENTION WAS THE PRODUCT OF LABORIOUS DISCUSSION AND NEGOTIATION; ANY ATTEMPT TO TINKER WITH IT EVEN ON A MINOR POINT WOULD REOPEN NEGOTIATIONS AND SET BACK THE WHOLE SPRFO IDEA PERHAPS IRRETRIEVABLY. I REINFORCED THIS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SUVA 01716 090715Z

POINT BY DESCRIBING IN SOME DETAIL THE ATMOSPHERE AND THE ALIGNMENTS IN THE JUNE NEGOTIATIONS ADDING AS POINTEDLY AS I COULD THAT IT WAS A PITY THAT JIOJI HAD TO BE ABSENT FROM THESE NEGOTIATIONS. HE SEEMED TO GET THE POINT OF MY REMARK WHICH ENCOURAGED ME TO TELL THE P.M. THAT I AM NOT QUITE SURE YET THAT I CONVINCED JIOJI NOT TO SEEK ANY AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT.

6. AFTER A THOUGHTFUL MOMENT RATU MARA SAID THAT HE WAS INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT THE U.S. HAS ACCEPTED THE DRAFT AND PROCEEDED TO RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INTERIM AGENCY THE DRIFT OF WHICH WAS TO INDICATE THAT THE TIME TO THINK OF AN INTERIM OFFICE HAD PASSED AND THAT THE NOTION OF TEMPORARY HQS GIVES HIM TROUBLE. HE HAD SEEN TOO MANY TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS LAST FOREVER TO WANT TO BE PARTY TO ONE.

7. HE WENT ON TO RAISE DOUBTS ABOUT HONIARA AS SUITABLE PERMANENT HQS ADDING THAT IT WAS A HASTY DECISION TO SETTLE ON HONIARA. ASKED WHERE HE WOULD RATHER SEE THE SPRFA HE SAID NOUMEA WHERE THE SPC HAS ALREADY DEVELOPED AN ACTIVITY CONCERNING FISHERIES. THE

CONVERSATION ENDED THERE.

9. COMMENT: WHETHER BRIEFED OR NOT ON THE DRAFT CONVENTION RATU MARA SEEMED TO HAVE A FIXED IDEA ABOUT THE NATURE OF SPRFO AS IT RELATED TO HIS CONVERSATION WITH MULDOON. HE SEES IT MORE AS A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION THAN AS AN ECONOMIC OR TECHNICAL ONE CONCERNED WITH MARINE RESOURCES AND THEIR PROPER MANAGEMENT AND EXPLOITATION.

9. ACCORDINGLY HE HAD VIUALIZED ITS MEMBERSHIP AS LIMITED TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS, SOMETHING LIKE A FISHERIES SPEC.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 SUVA 01716 090715Z

10. UNDOUBTEDLY JIOJI IS AWARE OF THIS WHICH EXPLAINS HIS CONSTANT PREOCCUPATION WITH THE DRAFT'S ARTICLES DEALING WITH MEMBERSHIP.

11. WHETHER THE REMARKS AGAINST TINKERING WITH THE DRAFT HAD ANY IMPACT IS INDEED AN OPEN QUESTION. AT BEST HE WILL LET JIOJI TRY HIS HAND IN THE PRELIMINARY SPEC MEETING PRIOR TO THE FORUM AND IF HE FAILS TO WIN ANY ALLIES RATU MARA WILL CUT HIS LOSSES BY STAYING AWAY FROM ANY INITIATIVES TO AMEND THE DRAFT.

12. WE DOUBT HOWEVER THAT HE WILL TAKE THE LEAD OR EVEN SHOW ANY PARTICULAR ENTHUSIASM TOWARDS A CONSENSUS FOR THE DRAFT. HE MAY EVEN GO ON RECORD WITH SOME EXPRESSION OF MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE SPRFO CONCEPT AS EMBODIED IN THE DRAFT CONVENTION. HE MAY WELL DO THAT BY RAISING FORCEFULLY THE QUESTION OF HOW COME NEW ZEALAND AND PNG ARE ALREADY CONCLUDING AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES ON FISHING IN THEIR ECONOMIC ZONES, A POINT WHICH HE MADE DURING OUR CONVERSATION.
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